



## An observation of Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei* in Uganda

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Le 8 février 1999 les auteurs, accompagnés de six autres observateurs, ont observé un Goéland railleur *Larus genei* au Lac Katwe, Queen Elizabeth NP, dans l'ouest de l'Ouganda. Les caractéristiques de l'oiseau ont pu être examinées dans d'excellentes conditions et des photos ont été prises. Dans la récente check-liste du pays, le Goéland railleur n'est mentionné que pour le lac Victoria<sup>2</sup>. En Ethiopie et au Kenya, il s'agit d'une espèce rare, que l'on retrouve sur les lacs salés de la Vallée du Rift<sup>3,5</sup>.

In the late afternoon of 8 February 1999, together with Ian Davidson, Paul Goldring and four Dutch birders, the authors visited Lake Katwe, Queen Elizabeth National Park (QENP) in western Uganda. Some maps indicate that Lake Katwe is connected to Lake Munyanyange, which is considered to be a potentially internationally important waterfowl area, due to the large numbers of wintering Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*. Both lakes are saline.

During our visit, c550 Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* with some (possible) Heuglin's Gull *Larus fuscus heuglini* were resting on the north-west bank of Lake Katwe, as was a flock of c60 Gull-billed Tern. Grey-headed Gull *Larus cirrocephalus* was also present. At 16.00 hrs, GLO directed his fellow observers' attention to the presence of a Slender-billed Gull *L. genei* among the Gull-billed Terns. When the flock flew, the Slender-billed Gull landed in the water c10 m offshore. Subsequently it swam toward the bank and joined some Grey-headed Gulls. We were able observe the bird, an adult in winter plumage, under excellent conditions. AJD and GLO took a number of photographs, one of which is presented here to document the occurrence.

*Larus genei* is relatively common on the coasts of North and West Africa. Urban *et al*<sup>1</sup> mention it as a vagrant in Nigeria, Sudan, Kenya and Ethiopia. For Ethiopia, Urban & Brown<sup>3</sup> report Slender-billed Gull as rare to scarce on the coast and at Rift Valley salines. Zimmermann *et al*<sup>5</sup> mention *Larus genei* as a scarce Palearctic migrant to Kenya with regular observations on Lake Turkana and Lake Nakuru. Rossouw & Sacchi<sup>2</sup> mention that the species has been observed on Lake Victoria near Kampala: birds were first found in this area, by Julius Aranitwe and Achilles Byaruhanga (of Nature Uganda) while undertaking waterbird surveys, in 1997. A flock of c55 birds, some in breeding plumage, was present at Lutembe Bay, by the Entebbe-



Adult winter Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei*, Lake Katwe, Uganda, 8 February 1999 (Gerald L. Ouweneel)

Kampala road, on 28 June 1997 and subsequently, on 25 June 1999, a single roosting flock of c200 was observed, and 15–20 photographed, in the same place (J Linsdell *in litt* to G Kirwan, May and July 1999).

### References

1. Dodman, T. and Taylor V. 1996. *African Waterfowl Census 1996*. Wageningen: Wetlands International.
2. Rossouw J. and Sacchi M. 1998. *Where to Watch Birds in Uganda*. Kampala: Uganda Tourist Board.
3. Urban, E.K. and Brown L.H. 1971. *A Checklist of the Birds of Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press.
4. Urban, E.K., Fry C.H. and Keith S. 1986. *The Birds of Africa*. Vol 2. London, UK: Academic Press.
5. Zimmermann, D.A., Turner D.A. and Pearson D.J. 1996. *Birds of Kenya and northern Tanzania*. London, UK: A. & C. Black.

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